AN
ARGUMENT

To prove the

UNITY

AND

PERFECTIONS

OF

GOD

a priori. By Mr Lowman: a dissenting minister at Clapham near London.

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THE following *Argument
is modeftly propos'd to
the Publick, as a Proof
of the Unity, and Perfections of
God*, a priori.

The Definition given of an Argument a priori *will, I hope, avoid many of the Difficulties, with
which every Attempt towards
fuch an Argument is ufually
prefs'd. It will be, I think, at leaft
fomewhat more than an Argument*
a pofteriori.

*If it fhall appear conclufive to
competent and impartial Judges,
as it has to fome Perfons, whofe
exact Judgment I have Reafon
to rely much upon, they will eafily perceive the great Advantage*

A 2　　　　　*of*

of such an Argument, in some of
the most important Questions in
Religion.

If after all it should be found
defective in some Parts, which
yet I hope it will not, I can how-
ever honestly say, a Discovery of
Truth will be always pleasing to
me, tho' at the same time it should
shew me, a Mistake of my own.

An

An Argument to prove the UNITY and PERFECTIONS of GOD, *a priori*.

DEFINITIONS.

1. AN Argument *a priori*, is what proves the Attributes, the secondary Qualities, or Effects of Beings from their Natures, primary Qualities or Definitions.

2. An Argument *a posteriori* is what proves the primary Qualities, or Natures of Things, from their Effects, or secondary Qualities.

3. *Possible*

3. *Possible* Existence is what may be, or whose Existence is not an Impossibility, or Contradiction.

4. *Necessary* Existence is what must be, and cannot but be; or such Existence, as arises from the Nature of the Thing it self.

5. *Contingent* Existence is such as may be, or may not be.

AXIOMS.

1. All Effects must have a Cause.

2. Every Thing is where it acts.

3. Nothing has no Affections, or Attributes.

PROPOSITIONS.

I. Existence is possible.

That Existence is *possible*, which does not include a Contradiction, by Definition Third*.

All

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* *Def.* 3. Possible Existence is what may be, or whose Existence is not an Impossibility or Contradiction.

All Existence is the Existence of something, or real Existence; for the Existence of Nothing is no Existence, and includes a Contradiction, Existence and non Existence at the same Time.

SCHOLIUM.

This Proposition seems very evident. It is no more than this, that whatever is not *impossible* is *possible*; and that nothing appears in the Nature of Things impossible, but what includes a Contradiction.

It does not suppose actual Existence, or so much as possible Existence, but proves it from the very Nature of Existence as not impossible; and what proves the Possibility of Existence in general, will prove all Existence possible, that does not appear impossible, or a Contradiction.

PROPO-

PROPOSITION II.

All possible Existence is either *necessary* or *contingent*.

All possible Existence may be, by Definition third.*

All Existence that may be, either must be, and in its own Nature cannot but be, which is *necessary* Existence, by Definition fourth† ; or it may not be, which is *contingent* Existence, by Definition fifth ||.

To suppose *possible* Existence *cannot* be is a Contradiction ; that it may be, and may not be at the same Time.

Therefore there can be no more than two sorts of possible Existence, either what

* *Def.* 3. Possible Existence is what may be, or whose Existence is not an Impossibility or Contradiction.

† *Def.* 4. Necessary Existence is what must be, and cannot but be, or such Existence, as arises from the Nature of the Thing is self.

|| *Def.* 5. Contingent Existence is such as may be, or may not be.

what only may be, or what also muſt be, that is, either neceſſary or contingent.

PROPOSITION III.

Some Exiſtence is neceſſary, if any Exiſtence is poſſible.

All poſſible Exiſtence is either contingent or neceſſary, by Propoſition ſecond *.

If all Exiſtence is *contingent*, and none *neceſſary*, all Exiſtence *may not be*, as well as it *may be*, by Definition fifth †.

What *may not be*, *cannot* be, without a prior Cauſe of Exiſtence, by Axiom firſt ‖.

If then *all* poſſible Exiſtence was only *contingent*, all Exiſtence would

B   be

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* *Prop.* 2. All poſſible Exiſtence is either neceſſary or contingent.

† *Def.* 5. Contingent Exiſtence is ſuch as may be, or may not be.

‖ *Ax.* 1. All Effects muſt have ſome Cauſe.

be *impossible*, as an Effect without a Cause.

To suppose all Existence *impossible* is contrary to Proposition first *.

There must therefore be some other Existence besides contingent; that is, there must be some necessary Existence, as all possible Existence is contingent or necessary by Proposition second †.

Necessary Existence must be actual Existence, actual Existence being included in the very Nature of it, according to Definition fourth ‖; and it is a plain Contradiction, for *necessary* Existence *not to be*.

SCHOLIUM.

This Proposition does not suppose any actual Existence, but proves it, I think, fully, from the two foregoing Propositions.

The

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* *Prop.* 1. Existence is possible.
† *Prop.* 2. All possible Existence is either necessary or contingent.
‖ *Def.* 4. Necessary Existence is what must be, and cannot but be, or such Existence as arises from the Nature of the Thing it self.

The Proof for the Possibility of Existence will remain good, unless the Impossibility of Existence could be shewn; for that will remain possible, which is not impossible; or, what is the same in Argument, which does not appear impossible.

Now the *Possibility* of contingent Existence, evidently supposes some *necessary* Existence; without which, all Existence would be impossible. This clearly shews some Existence is necessary, or all Existence is impossible.

To suppose all Existence impossible, is not only a Supposition without Proof, but contrary to a plain Proof, for the Possibility of Existence, from the very Notions of Possible and Existence.

It is not allowable, I think, to oppose to such Evidence, a bare Supposition, without Reason or Ground : As, that it is *possible* there may be no necessary Existence, and therefore that *possibly* all Existence may be *impossible*.

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To oppose the Proof in the forego-
ing Propositions, it should be shewn,
either that all Existence is in its own
Nature *impossible*, or that there is some-
thing in the Nature of necessary Ex-
istence, to make necessary Existence
impossible ; upon which the Impossi-
bility of all Existence would follow :
otherwise it will remain, according to
the Rules of right Reasoning, not im-
possible : that is, it will remain possi-
ble; and if possible, then necessary; else
it would be possible, and impossible at
the same Time, which is a manifest
Contradiction.

It may be further observ'd on this
Argument, that *necessary* Existence, if
it be not impossible, must be, and can-
not but be. It is of *contingent* Ex-
istence only, we can suppose it may be,
or it may not be; of necessary Ex-
istence, we can only conclude, either
it *must* be, or it *cannot* be.

COROL.

COROLLARY.

From this Proposition it will follow, that contingent Existence depends upon necessary Existence, for its Being, and all Qualities, and Powers arising from it; and *vice versa*, that necessary Existence cannot depend on contingent Existence for any thing.

PROPOSITION IV.

Necessary Existence must be eternal.

Necessary Existence cannot but be, by Definition fourth *.

It must therefore always be, and cannot but always be.

To suppose it possible that necessary Existence at any Time may not be, is contradictory to the Supposition that it is necessary. Necessary Existence there-

fore

* *Def.* 4. Necessary Existence is such Existence as must be, and cannot but be; or such Existence as arises from the Thing it self.

fore can have no beginning or End of Exiſtence, that is, it muſt be eternal.

PROPOSITION V.

Neceſſary Exiſtence muſt be, wherever Exiſtence is poſſible; that is, muſt be infinite.

For all Exiſtence is contingent or neceſſary, by Propoſition ſecond *.

And all contingent Exiſtence is impoſſible without neceſſary Exiſtence, as depending intirely upon it, by the third Propoſition †, and its Corollary ‖.

Wherever Exiſtence is poſſible, it muſt be either of a neceſſary or contingent Being.

If of a *neceſſary* Being, it is what was to be proved.

If

* *Prop.* 2. All poſſible Exiſtence is either neceſſary or contingent.

† *Prop.* 3. Some Exiſtence is neceſſary, if any Exiſtence be poſſible.

‖ *Corol.* Contingent Exiſtence depends upon neceſſary Exiſtence for its Being, and all Qualities and Powers ariſing from it, and *vice verſa*.

If of a *contingent* Being, it supposes the Existence of a *necessary* Being, by Corollary of the third Proposition, and second Axiom*.

PROPOSITION VI.

There can be but one necessarily existent Being.

Let two distinct Beings of necessary Existence be supposed, as A and B.

They must differ from each other (to be distinct Beings) either by a different Manner of *Existence*, or by different Attributes and Perfections.

Two Beings of necessary Existence, cannot differ in *Manner of Existence*; for necessary Existence being such as must be, and cannot but be, as arising from the Nature of the Thing it self,

by

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* *Axiom.* 2. Every Thing is where it acts.

by Definition fourth*, muſt be, and cannot but be, one and the ſame Manner of Exiſtence.

Nor can Beings of neceſſary Exiſtence differ from each other by different Perfections, or Attributes.

For ſuch ſuppoſed difference muſt be, either in Perfections *neceſſary* to neceſſary Exiſtence, or in Perfections *contingent* to neceſſary Exiſtence.

They cannot differ in Perfections *neceſſary* to neceſſary Exiſtence; for as both have neceſſary Exiſtence by Suppoſition, they muſt both have all the Perfections neceſſary to ſuch Exiſtence.

If then A has Perfections which B has not, and B has Perfections which A has not, theſe Perfections muſt in both be *contingent* to neceſſary Exiſtence. For they *may* belong, or they *may not* belong to neceſſary Exiſtence; that

* *Def.* 1. Neceſſary Exiſtence is ſuch Exiſtence as muſt be; and cannot but be, or ſuch Exiſtence as ariſes from the Nature of the Thing it ſelf.

that is, they are contingent to it, by the fifth Definition *.

But all Things contingent depend on what is neceſſary, by Corollary of Propoſition the third †.

And if contingent Perfections did not ariſe from neceſſary Perfections, they would be impoſſible, by the firſt Axiom ‖.

Therefore all contingent Perfections muſt be included in the Power of neceſſary Perfection.

Now A and B, two ſuppoſed Beings of neceſſary Exiſtence, have each of them all the Attributes *neceſſary* to neceſſary Exiſtence, by Suppoſition. And have all *contingent* Perfections, included in the Power of neceſſary Perfection. Therefore they have all the

C   ſame

* *Def.* 5. Contingent Exiſtence is ſuch Exiſtence as may be, or may not be.

† *Cor. Prop.* 3. Contingent Exiſtence depends on neceſſary Exiſtence for its Being, and all Qualities and Powers ariſing from it.

‖ *Axiom* 1. All Effects muſt have a Cauſe.

same Perfections, whether neceſſary or contingent; or, neither has what the other has not, equally in its ſelf, and in its own power.

Therefore A and B not differing from each other, in their manner of Exiſtence, or in any Attributes whether neceſſary or contingent, do not differ at all, that is, they are one, and the ſame Being, which was to be proved.

PROPOSITION VII.

The Unity of God, may be proved by an Argument *a priori*.

For it is proved from its Nature, and primary Attribute of its Exiſtence, that is, neceſſary Exiſtence; which is an Argument *a priori*, according to the firſt Definition *.

PROPO-

* *Def.* 1. An Argument *a priori*, is what proves the Attributes, ſecondary Qualities, or Effects of Beings, from their Natures, primary Qualities, or Definitions.

PROPOSITION VIII.

The one neceſſary exiſtent Being, muſt have all poſſible Perfections.

For all poſſible Perfections muſt be the Perfections of ſomething, by the third Axiom *.

All Things, or which is the ſame, all Exiſtence is either neceſſary or contingent, by Propoſition the ſecond †.

All contingent Exiſtence depends on neceſſary Exiſtence, by Corollary of Propoſition the third ‖.

Therefore all poſſible Perfections muſt either be the Perfections of neceſſary Exiſtence, or of contingent Beings; and ſo dependant on, and cauſed by neceſ-

C 2　　　　ſary

* *Axiom* 3. Nothing has no Perfections, or Attributes.

† *Prop.* 2. All poſſible Exiſtence is either neceſſary or contingent.

‖ *Cor. Prop.* 3. Contingent Exiſtence depends on neceſſary Exiſtence for its Being, and all Qualities, and Powers ariſing from it.

fary Being, according to Corollary of Propofition the third and Axiom the firft *. Otherwife they would be impoffible, contrary to Suppofition that they are poffible.

There can be but one neceffarily exiftent Being, by Propofition the fixth †.

Therefore this one neceffary exiftent Being muft have all poffible Perfections.

PROPOSITION IX.

Contingent Exiftence is poffible.

For contingent Exiftence does not include a Contradiction; and what does not include a Contradiction, may be, or is *poffible*, by Definition the third ‖.

If it fhou'd be fuppos'd to include a Contradiction, that Exiftence may be contingent, it muft certainly follow from

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* *Axiom* 1. All Effects muft have a Caufe.
† *Prop.* 6. There can be but one neceffarily exiftent Being.
‖ *Def.* 3. Poffible Exiftence is fuch as may be, or whofe Exiftence does not imply a Contradiction.

from the Nature of Exiſtence, either that no Exiſtence can be, and ſo all Exiſtence is *impoſſible*; or that all Exiſtence cannot but be, and ſo all Exiſtence is *neceſſary* : for if any Exiſtence may be, and may not be, that is contingent, by Definition the fifth *.

It cannot be a Contradiction to the Nature of Exiſtence to ſuppoſe it *may be* ; the Exiſtence of ſomething is poſſible, by Propoſition the firſt †; and for the ſame Reaſon that ſomething is poſſible or may be, many Things are poſſible, or may be too.

Nor is it a Contradiction to ſuppoſe ſome poſſible Exiſtence may not be; for it follows not from the general Nature of Exiſtence, that it cannot but be, but from one particular Manner of Exiſtence, that is, neceſſary Exiſtence.

It

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* *Def.* 5. Contingent Exiſtence is ſuch Exiſtence as may be, or may not be.

† *Prop.* 1. Exiſtence is poſſible.

It is no Contradiction to the Nature of Existence, to suppose A a Ball of Fire, B a Ball of Earth, to continue for any limited Time, and then to cease to be in any particular Part of Space for that Time, and in no other, to leave any particular Part of Space, and move to another. It is no Contradiction to the Nature of Existence, to suppose A a Ball of Fire, to be in any Place to-day, and not in that Place to-morrow, or not to be in any Place, that is, not to be at all to-morrow.

It is no Contradiction then to the Nature of Existence, to suppose it may be, or it may not be; it is therefore no Contradiction that some Existence may be, or may not be; therefore contingent Existence is possible.

PRO-

PROPOSITION X.

The one neceſſary exiſtent Being, is a free Agent.

For contingent Exiſtence is poſſible, by Propoſition the ninth *.

But all contingent Exiſtence muſt depend on neceſſary Exiſtence, by Axiom the firſt † ; and Corollary of Propoſition the third ‖ ; or it would be impoſſible, as an Effect without a Cauſe, contrary to Suppoſition, that it is contingent ; that is, that it may be, or is poſſible : therefore neceſſary Exiſtence muſt be the *Agent* producing contingent Exiſtence.

But neceſſary Exiſtence, as the Cauſe of contingent Exiſtence, does not act

neceſſarily,

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* *Prop.* 9. Contingent Exiſtence is poſſible.
† *Axiom* 1. All Effects muſt have a Cauſe.
‖ *Cor. Prop.* 3. Contingent Exiſtence depends on neceſſary Exiſtence, for its Being, and all Qualities, and Powers ariſing from it.

necessarily, for then contingent Existence could not but be; that is, it self would be necessary, by Definition the Fourth *, contrary to Supposition, that it is contingent; that is, that it may not be, as well as it may be.

Hence it must follow, that necessary Existence does act as the Cause of contingent Existence, without which it could not be: but it does not act necessarily, for then it could not but be; that is, as it *acts*, but not *necessarily*, it acts *freely*, that is, is a free Agent, which was to be proved.

PROPOSITION XI.

Matter is not a necessary, but a contingent Being.

By Matter, I mean, a Body extended, solid, divisible, and moveable by certain

* *Def.* 4. Necessary Existence is what must be, and cannot but be.

certain stated Laws. The Proposition may be therefore, otherways thus stated :

If a Body is given, subject to the stated mechanical Laws of Motion, that Body so subject to those mechanical Laws, must be a *contingent*, and cannot be a *necessary* Being.

I concern not my self here, whether it has been proved, or whether it is in Fact, an essential Property of Matter, that it is subject to the mechanical Laws of Motion : it is sufficient to my Argument, to prove it of Matter according to the Definition I give of it, for that will prove it of all Matter to which that Definition will agree.

Now there is one Property necessary or essential to Matter, or all Bodies subject to the mechanical Laws of Motion, which is not improperly call'd by Mathematicians, *Materiæ Inertia*, or the *Vis Inertiæ*, which we may call the Inactivity of Matter. By it is meant

that

that there is in all Bodies a Refiftance to every other Body, that would change the State in which they are, either of Reft or Motion; and that this is ever in proportion to the Quantities of Matter such Bodies contain: so that Bodies at Reft, would continue in Reft, till put in Motion by fome other Bodies, with a Force fuperior to the Refiftance of the Body at Reft; and Bodies in Motion would continue their Motion, until ftopp'd by a Force fuperior to their Re-fiftance. This Impulfe, Force, or Action, communicated to, and exercifed upon every Body, in order to change its prefent State, either of Reft or Motion, is properly called by Mathematicians, a *Vis impreffa,* or a Force communicated.

Now if a Body is given, of which fuch *Vis Inertiæ,* or Inactivity, is an effential Property, as it muft be of all Bodies fubject to the Laws of Motion; this muft be a *contingent* Being: for it de-pends

pends upon some other Being, for all Motion, Action, and Power of Action whatsoever; neither of which it has of it self, but each must be communicated by a *Vis Impressa*, or be receiv'd from the active Power of another.

Therefore it must be *contingent*, and cannot be *necessary*, as Things contingent depend upon necessary Being : for their Being, and all Qualities, and Powers arising from it, by Corollary of Proposition the third * ; and necessary Existence can no ways depend upon contingent Existence.

Besides, on Supposition there is such a Being, as is subject to the mechanical Laws of Motion, it cannot be a necessary Being.

For, as there is a *Vis Inertiæ*, or Inactivity in such a Being, that it must

<center>D 2</center>rest,

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* *Cor. Prop.* 3. Contingent Existence depends upon necessary Existence, for its Being, and all Qualities, and Powers arising from it; and *Vice versa*, necessary Existence cannot depend on contingent Existence for any thing.

rest, until it shall be moved by another; and when moved, cannot rest, until it shall be stop'd by another; and moves just with the Celerity or Swiftness communicated to it, by the Force or active Power of another; such Being is not properly an *Agent*, least of all a *free Agent*; it only obeys the Power of another, and is moved by it, without any Choice of its own: therefore it cannot be that one necessary existent Being, which is a *free Agent*, by Proposition the tenth *.

Therefore cannot be a *necessary* Being, as there is but *one* necessary Being, by Proposition the sixth †.

Therefore must be a *contingent* Being, as all *possible* Existence is either *necessary*

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* *Prop.* 10. The one necessarily existent Being is a free Agent.

† *Prop.* 6. There can be but one necessarily existent Being.

ry or *contingent*, by Propofition the fecond *, which was to be proved.

SCHOLIUM.

This is a Demonftration as to all fuch Matter, in whole and in part, of which fuch *Vis Inertiæ* is a neceffary or effential property. That is, in Fact, and Experience, it is a Demonftration as to all Parts of Matter known to us, all which are uniformly fubject to the mechanical Laws of Motion, which is as demonftrable as the Powers of a Balance, or a Wheel.

And this feems a good Reafon, why we fhould account it an effential Property of all Matter whatfoever, in Whole, and in Part, according to Sir *Ifaac Newton*'s Principles, (Reg. 3.) which is this, That the Qualities of Bodies which cannot be increas'd or diminifh'd, and which belong to all Bodies,

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* *Prop.* 2. All poffible Exiftence is either neceffary or contingent.

Bodies, on which we can make Experiments, are to be taken for the Qualities of all Bodies ; which is the same Thing with an essential Property of Body or Matter.

PROPOSITION XII.

Creation is possible.

For *contingent* Existence is possible, by Proposition the ninth *.

All *contingent* Existence must depend upon *necessary* Existence, by Corollary of Proposition the third †.

Other

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* *Prop.* 9. Contingent Existence is possible.

† *Cor. Prop.* 3. Contingent Existence depends upon necessary Existence for its Being, and all Qualities and Powers arising from it.

Otherways it would be an Effect without a Cause, contrary to Axiom first *.

Therefore *contingent* Exiſtence muſt receive its Being from *neceſſary* Exiſtence; that is, it muſt be *created* by it. But contingent Exiſtence is poſſible, therefore Creation is poſſible; which was to be proved.

COROLLARY.

On Suppoſition of the actual Exiſtence of Matter, Creation is actual.

For Matter is a contingent Being, by Propoſition eleventh †.

Contingent Being muſt receive its Exiſtence from neceſſary Being, by

Corol-

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* *Axiom* 1. All Effects muſt have a Cauſe.

† *Prop*. 11. Matter is not a neceſſary, but a contingent Being.

Corollary of Proposition the third *: that is, it must be created by it.

Therefore, on Supposition, Matter doth *actually* exist, Creation must be also *actual*.

* *Cor. Prop.* 3. Contingent Exiftence depends upon neceffary Exiftence, for its Being, and all Qualities and Powers arifing from it.

FINIS.